United Nations A/54/834–S/2000/295

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
6 April 2000

Original: English

General Assembly
Fifty-fourth session
Agenda item 43
The situation in the Middle East

Security Council
Fifty-fifth year

Letter dated 6 April 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith an urgent letter addressed to you by General Émile Lahoud, President of the Republic of Lebanon (see annex).

I have the honour to kindly request that this letter be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 43, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Selim **Tadmoury**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

00-38143 (E) 060400 060400

Annex to the letter dated 6 April 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic]

President Émile Lahoud conveys his compliments to the Secretary-General, expresses gratitude for his efforts for a just and comprehensive peace in the region and addresses to him the following questions concerning the proposals for a unilateral Israeli withdrawal:

1. What, in your view, are the reasons that in 1978 led the United Nations and the Security Council to adopt resolution 425? Was the Palestinian issue the reason?

2. Why have the United Nations and the Security Council been unable to implement this resolution by way of the forces they have stationed in Lebanon for 22 years? Are you aware of the number of the incursions and the scale of the losses in both human and material terms that Lebanon has suffered since 1978 and up to the present moment as a result of Israel's failure to comply with resolution 425 (1978)?

3. Do you consider that Israel's proposed implementation of resolution 425 (1978) today is:

- In response to the international will and an international endeavour?
- Israel's voluntary contribution to the implementation of the resolution?
- A result of the operations of the Resistance and of Israeli losses?
- To protect the Lebanese people, victims of aggression, or to protect the aggressor?

4. Do you consider that Lebanon has paid dearly for this Israeli retreat? If so, do you find it logical that Lebanon is also being asked to pay the price of protecting this withdrawal and protecting the borders of Israel?

5. Further to question 1 above: if certain Palestinian groups were to attempt to engage in cross-border operations in the context of the right of return and because they have no solutions for their future, do you believe that UNIFIL would be capable of coping with small-scale daily warfare along the borders?

6. As long as there is a possibility of small-scale warfare along the borders fuelled by armed Palestinian groups coming from the Palestinian camps in the interior and in the light of past experiences, most importantly the fact that resolution 425 (1978) stemmed from an Israeli incursion that had Palestinian causes, do you not believe that Lebanon's interest requires that UNIFIL should first and foremost disarm the Palestinian camps, or participate on the ground in doing so, whether in Tyre, Sidon, Tripoli, Beirut, Baalbek or elsewhere, before they deploy along the borders? Does the United Nations accept as a Lebanese condition that such a deployment along the borders should not be allowed before the Palestinians are disarmed, given that the interior is linked with the border zone and that UNIFIL, according to resolution 425 (1978), has the purpose of "restoring international peace and security and assisting the Government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area" (the south and the Western Bekaa)? Is it possible to restore this authority without disarming the Palestinians?

7. Whether or not there is such disarmament, what are the United Nations guarantees that Israel will not violate Lebanon's land borders, maritime boundaries and airspace or engage in adventitious attacks in the South and in the interior? What guarantees are there to prevent a recurrence of what has happened previously in the presence of UNIFIL, which has been stationed in the South since 1978? Will the proposed international force have means of deterrence on land, at sea and in the air in order to enforce these guarantees? Who will order such a force to implement the guarantees in the event of a breach or of attacks?

8. In the United Nations archives for 1978, there is evidence that on 31 July 1978 the Lebanese Government sent forces from the Lebanese Army to the South to enforce resolution 425 (1978) at the request of the United Nations and that the Israeli forces and their proxies forcibly intercepted the Lebanese Army at the town of Kawkaba, bombarded it and prevented it from advancing, leaving a number of dead and wounded among its ranks. Since that time, Israel has carried out successive incursions that have cost Lebanon thousands of dead and wounded and material and other losses in excess of $70 billion. Today, Israel says that it is about to implement resolution 425 (1978) out of respect for the international community, while everyone knows that it is doing so as a result of its losses and because of the Resistance. The question is: faced with this situation, who decided to exempt Israel from the reparations due to Lebanon and its people as a result of its intransigence and its constant hostility to this resolution up to the present time? On what basis was this forgiveness given? Does the aggressor, in the view of the United Nations, have the right to get away scot-free? Furthermore, is the aggressor entitled to seek protection from the victim of its aggression?

These are questions to which Lebanon seeks answers from the United Nations before deciding to venture into other details.

In the meantime, Lebanon is committed to a just and comprehensive peace that provides guarantees to all while it is of the view that any Israeli withdrawal under pressure from the Resistance is a major victory for Lebanon and for resolution 425 (1978) itself. It is a victory on which it is difficult to bargain in the absence of the clarifications sought and given the customary Israeli manoeuvring.

(*Signed*) Émile **Lahoud**
President of the Lebanese Republic